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## State Program Helps Companies Keep Workers and Save Money



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By Peter Bukowski

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**YAKIMA** -- He's getting money for not having a job, but Lloyd Bordelon actually works almost a full work week.

"I've always kinda hoped that my job is pretty secure. Likewise there's the economic picture of the employer, too. If you can't keep someone busy, whether they're a really good employee or not, you're gonna have to maybe cut back on their hours," Bordelon says.

Washington's shared work program allows employers to keep employees they might have cut.

Trading the unemployment line for the assembly line is basically what the shared work programs allows people to do. A company can cut their employee's hours and the state will make up the difference. That saves the state and you thousands in unemployment costs.

But workers don't get full compensation. Instead of getting paid his normal wages, Lloyd gets a percentage as unemployment for the time he doesn't spend as ASAP

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Fabricators in Yakima. And he's not the only one whose job has been saved.

"In the past, if we would get three or four people on it that would be a lot. This year we have 10 or 12 people on it," says Terry Schweyene, part owner of ASAP.

The state says it saved \$14 million in unemployment costs while helping to keep businesses in the Valley running at maximum capacity.

"We spend a lot of time training, school, special schools and operation of the machines. We're able to keep them and it keeps permanent lay-offs at pretty much zero," explains Shweyene.

He says without question he'd be cutting employees if not for the program.

Unemployment is staggering, putting a strain on an already crunched state budget. The shared work program shares the burden of paying employees with businesses, until they can shoulder it alone.

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